
USING OUTCOME-BASED APPROACH TO ENHANCE THE PROGRAM QUALITY IN A PUBLIC SECTOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTE

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ABSTRACT

With the provision of course outline for the new semester multiple queries start originating from students concerning topics/ units that have more significance in the learning of a particular program and this whole activity gives a sense of (ala carte menu) to the teacher, as if she is bound to offer best choices (as favorite topics) from the design curriculum. The prime reason for this sort of semester take-off is that students are often kept blindfolded from course expectations, lack of leverages, and opportunities to work on those goals. The following study aims to investigate the effect of highlighted described outcomes on the willingness of students' learning approaches and achievements. The study was webbed around the BS class students of semester 2nd and 4th who purposely consented to the study. The study design was based on the analysis of students' awareness, identification, generalization, conceptualization, and analyzing abilities of designed outcomes of the targeted program and draw their learning activities accordingly. As per the outcome of the study, it appeared that, students' practices showed more indulgence towards the teaching and learning processes, a sense of responsibility and collaboration increases towards the process consequently affecting quality.

KEYWORDS

Outcome Based Learning (OBL), Andragogy, Quality Enhancement, Higher Education, Student-Centered Approach.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a wave of immense experimentation taking place in the field of higher education. Mindful teaching and learning processes plays an important role in both the sustainability of the process and the quality of services provisions (Yen, Chen, Hao, 2023). With the approval of sustainable developmental goals, there

is a rise in government interest and organizations' indulgence towards the advocacy of students' centered approaches in teaching and learning. There is a constant capacity building needs for teachers' and learners' progress (Mokhtaripour, 2011).

There is an increasing need for higher education institutes to adapt their instructional strategies in more pressing manner. The outcome-based approach much more prioritizes measure-able skills and competencies that students should acquire by the end of their program. A vast number of practical experiences, and a widened scope of study schemes and activities must be included in higher education teaching strategies with main focus on students' potential and maximization of that potential (Ahmod, & Zhang, 2021). A well established and updated higher education system follows six basic principles covering main aspects like using discussion methods in classrooms, an atmosphere of respect and empathy towards each other in the classrooms and at the premises, dissemination of thoughtfulness towards the procedure, diversification in the process of assessment, challenging learning with a variety of opportunities (Ahmed, Zhag, 2021;Yakovleva &Yalkoleb, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The substantial switch can be observed especially in the recent post-covid years in the nature of courses that are being offered in the higher education sector. What modalities are opted, students concerns and understanding must be a part of it (Bernauer, Fuller & Cassel, 2024). Numerous researches have been administered that are related to the teaching process in higher education that linked between theoretical and practical aspects of learning processes and essential as it leads to meaningful learning, helping students to relate their classroom activities with real-world experiences (Jensen & Ottesen, 2022). With the emergence of multiple educational modalities, there is another paradigm shift in the domain of higher education and that is the role of outcome-based teaching and learning process. Outcome-based education is an approach that is highly related to the students' potential and the use of those potential in the accommodation of new learning by using various practical measures (Sunra, Aeni & Sally, 2024). The quality of an education program is also another factor that supports the adaptability of the outcomes-based approaches in higher education. The impact of program quality can be assessed by observing the experiences of students in and outside of the higher education institutes (Tam, 2014).

As per the recent trends and needs of the century, the ideology of adult education experiences should be based on andragogy. The perspective that andragogy has is revolving individual's learning experiences and as a support to develop a reflective cognitive learning styles among students. This sort of learning styles often appears when students are allowed to question about their learning needs and fulfillment of those needs by using different methods in the process. (Amin, 2020). The concept of

andragogy is associated with a strong curriculum which helps teachers to inculcate learning by adapting multiple methods and tools in the classroom while its focus remains on the learner-centered environment (Irfan, Islam, & Sood, 2023).

The concepts of outcome-based approach is complicated and laborious. The process can be utilized to develop a rigorous curriculum and challenging experiences for students to promote their learning. As per recent studies, the approach can be applied to the up gradation of education quality at the tertiary education level (Mufanti, Carter, & England, 2024). In order to establish an environment for students to benefit from practical experiences, teachers must be aware of students expectations' attached to the program and their prior experiences so they can gain from a structured multi-source environment (Livingstone & Cuming, 2023). In an outcome-based approach, students directly involved in the process of measuring their own progress of learning, selecting suitable tools, and collecting evidences of their learning. This direct involvement in the process and self-accountability raise the standards of the quality of program. Such practices are fully experiential as students up to some level have learned to generate their own assessment goals by communicating their learning outputs. This sort of student experiences driven program where teachers only act as facilitators and supporters of learning which enhance students' understanding towards their learning goals and shapes the outcomes of students and the quality standards of programs (Mufanti, Carter, & England, 2024).

Theoretical Perspective

The plan of study is constructed on the ideology of Kolb's experiential learning. The approach emphasizes on the effective active learning and indicates a quality instructional method. In higher education, learning requires multiple capabilities which promote not only domain related mastery in skills, but rather its focus on the acquisition of expertise needed to manufacture cognitive experiences and integrate learning completely (Gupta, 2023). Kolb's theoretical perspective is highly focused on laying the concrete foundations of knowledge which support students' active learning. A learning approach that challenges students to interrogate their own learning and understanding. It is a path where an academia student performs as a self-critique of obtained learning opportunities and the effectiveness of experiences they gained (Pandita, & Kiran, 2023). The propositions of the study are fabricated in the reflection of this theoretical perspective in order to gauge the robustness of outcomes based methods specially when being operated and integrated via students' own lenses.

Conceptual Framework

The focal point of the study is that, the students' learning experiences are based on the understanding of learning outcomes presented at the initial level of program commencement. This knowledge of scope related to the learning outcomes serves as

the driving force to not only comprehend provided knowledge but also amalgamation of learned experiences leading it to the earning of synthetic level. The core concept of the study is based on the designing and implementation of learning outcomes in such a way which not only make students aware of the needs and processes of the field but also helps them to increase their learning skills, knowledge, thinking, and communication and generalization of learned skills. Also, the study surrounds the students' interpretation of established content learning outcomes and accommodates the relevancy of that into their learning.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate students' awareness level regarding learning outcomes of the program they are studying.
2. To find out students' understanding of content knowledge of the subjects they are enrolled in.
3. To explore students' generalizing ability of practical practices related to the content they are learning.
4. To find out students' ability to conceptualize and communicate the content of their subjects.
5. To examine students' preparedness to infer the relationship between set outcomes and assessment process, used during teaching and for end evaluation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Whether students are aware of effectiveness & implementation of learning outcomes at program level?
2. Do students keep track of the alignment of learning outcomes with the flow of subject units?
3. Whether awareness of expected outcomes affect students' performance at class level and in extra Curricular activities?
4. Does awareness about learning outcomes help to enhance the quality of program content and approaches in higher education?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. Students are not significantly aware with the use and implications of learning outcomes of subjects they are studying
2. Students are not able to perform significant classification among subject content.
3. Student are facing significant limitations in the generalization and application of content being taught in the program.
4. Students do not face any significant difficulties in the conceptualization and communication in the taught curriculum.
5. Students face significant limitations to infer the relationship between set objectives and assessment methods used during and at the end of the program.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to understand the phenomena of students' awareness level regarding the needs and demands related to the program they are enrolled in and how to gain in-depth benefits of knowledge the study was designed as quantitative descriptive exploratory research. The design provides a deeper understanding of students' recognition level and it further accommodates the researcher's purpose to investigate the phenomena via different possibilities (Tona, 2011).

Population and sampling

As the study is based on the case method, the population of the study comprised students who are enrolled in the BS program of the department of special education. A hundred (N=100) consented Students from BS semester 2nd and 4th were purposely selected as the sample of the study. Non-probability sampling techniques are used to focus on the preference to choose a particular group to perform interventions on. The direct matching of the audience with the objectives of the study brings refinement in data and enhances the accuracy of the study (Campbell et. al., 2020).

Instrumentation

Thorough observations and a pilot study were conducted to address the validity of the instrument. A structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for the study. The questionnaire was designed on five points likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree with six variables containing 51 items as knowledge =10, skills= 11, analysis= 04, communication= 10, creativity=09, and critical thinking= 07. In addition, with this questionnaire to retain the element of quality of teaching and curriculum (both content and instructional approaches) quality enhancement (QEC) proforma were also used to make students aware of what and how to perceive when acquiring content in-depth understanding.

Ethical concerns

In order to fulfill ethical measures consent were taken from students who had been selected for the study. Students who were agreed upon consent then briefed about the process of the study and the secrecy of their opinions. The purpose of the study was not to establish any gender relevancy regarding the understanding and experiencing process toward learning outcomes. Thus, For the purpose of anonymity, variables like students' names and gender were not shared in the demographic section of the research.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The method of exploring percentages of responses along with the chi-square analysis; were used to analyze the obtained data and to test the hypotheses of the study.

Hypothesis 01: Responses in percentages

Figure #01: Knowledge

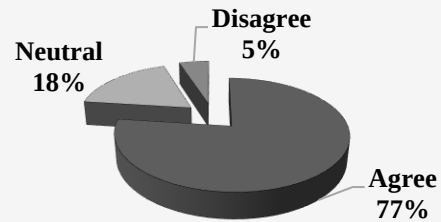


Figure #02: Skills

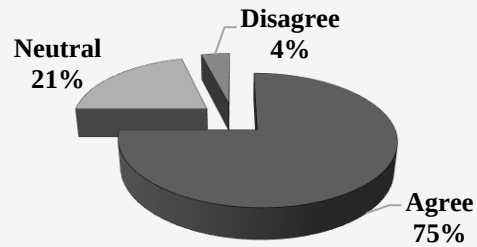


Figure #03: Creativity

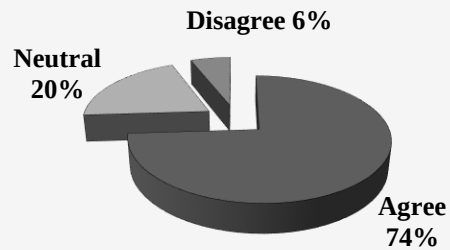


Figure #04: Critical Thinking

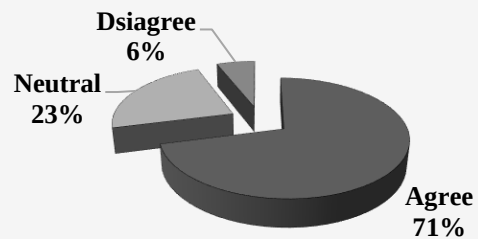
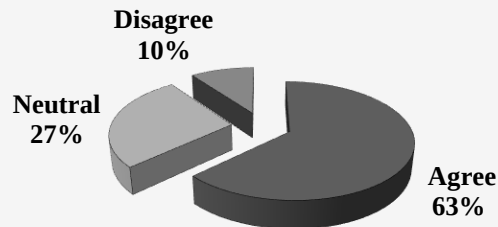
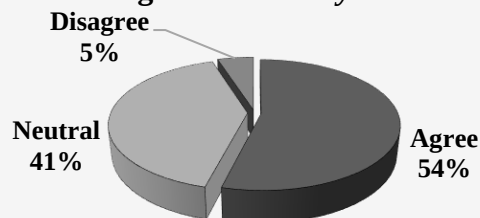


Figure #05: Communication**Figure #06: Analysis**

The above pie- charts show the percentage distribution of students understanding in attainment of knowledge, skills, creativity, critical thinking, communication and analysis by learning about the targeted outcomes at the initial phase of their educational program. By observing the above distributions of data it seems clear that very less number of students disagree that they did not find any enhancement in the acquisition and use of above mentioned variables. In addition, majority of the student shows agreement. However, the number of indifferent students is still high (specifically in analysis, critical thinking and communication skills) which shows traces of confusion in their understanding and difficulties within the transitional acceptance of variety of instructional approaches.

Table 01:

Hypothesis 02	Calculated Value	Tabulated Value
Students are not able to perform significant classification among subject content	20.23	5.99
Calculated value is > table value		
Our calculated value (20.23) is greater than the tabulated value (5.99) therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.		
If p value< 0.05 then statistically significant.		
If p value> 0.05 then not statistically significant.		

Table 02:

Hypothesis 03	Calculated Value	Tabulated Value
Student are facing significant limitations in the generalization and application of content being taught in the program	9.85	5.99

Calculated value is > table value

Our calculated value (9.85) is greater than the tabulated value (5.99) therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

If p value < 0.05 then statistically significant.

If p value > 0.05 then not statistically significant.

Table 03:

Hypothesis 04	Calculated Value	Tabulated Value
Students do not face any significant difficulties in the conceptualization and communication in the taught curriculum	24.96	5.99

Calculated value is > table value

Our calculated value (24.96) is greater than the tabulated value (5.99) therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

If p value < 0.05 then statistically significant.

If p value > 0.05 then not statistically significant.

Table 04:

Hypothesis 05	Calculated Value	Tabulated Value
Students face significant limitations to infer the relationship between set objectives and assessment methods used during and at the end of the program.	175.54	5.99

Calculated value is > table value

Our calculated value (175.54) is greater than the tabulated value (5.99) therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

If p value < 0.05 then statistically significant.

If p value > 0.05 then not statistically significant.

DICUSSION

The study was designed to investigate the provision of program outcomes to the students in the higher education system while maintaining the quality of the whole process. Students get a better understanding of content and allow processes related to teaching and learning. The study reveals that students do face significant challenges in various aspects during their learning experience of a program (Asim, Vaz, Ahmed, & Sadiq, 2021). It was assumed, that practices of providing awareness regarding outcomes are so rare that students are not prepared to assimilate what they are actually required to cover during their program of studies? Outcome based approach can be used to describe the existence of any program and to bring improvement in the instructional approach (Tam, 2014). By analyzing the primary hypothesis it becomes obvious that a very decent number of students show indifferences when asked regarding the enhancement of their skills like knowledge, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and analyses (Paolini, 2015). The observed responses had neutrality of students showed that the use of an outcomes base approach is not in their practice and while the process introduces to them the transition gets difficult for them and causes confusion. One reason of students' exhibition of neutrality is that outcome-based approach is not limited to short-term based inquiry but rather a long-term process with the involvement of all teachers included in the program. So, in this case of probing, students got overwhelmed and unable to achieve what was being expected to (Naskar, Karmakar, 2023).

However, the rigorous efforts to make students perceive what they could achieve in the subject they are studying if they intended to focus on those areas which could be beneficial in their learning and achievements. Hence, when the researcher assumed, that, that the process would bring content knowledge with its application, generalization of the taught content, and communicating the needs of the subject. In addition, setting targets to develop a relatable assessment mode then there must be a step-by-step framework to approach it (Brooks, Dobbins, Scott, Rawlinson, Norman, 2014). The analysis showed that the outcome-based instructional process did encompasses the feeling of accountability among students as students showed clearly gained of problem solving skills, understanding of content, and generalizing of that content in various ways (Hamidi, Hejran, Sarwari, & Edigeevna, 2024). Though, the ability of students to classify subject content effectively suggests a foundational understanding of the material. However, no significant limitations were observed in applying and generalizing this knowledge pointing to potential gaps in pedagogical approaches. When it comes to conceptualization and communication the data indicates that while students may understand concepts in isolation, it has been observed that teachers should put extra efforts to inculcate the integration strategies of learned behaviors and to articulate and use these concepts in broader contexts (Paolini, 2015). As the interpretation of outcomes' framework and related

requirements is a critical job with the need for interpretation skills. Thus, it is difficult for students to perform the critical analysis of targets and their achievements without any prior training and or constant guidance (Erikson & Erikson, 2018). The findings of the study are very much aligned with previous research outcomes that emphasize the importance of active learning strategies in enhancing student engagement and comprehension. Studies have shown that traditional lecture-based methods may not adequately support students in applying concepts beyond the classroom (Mufanti, Carter, & England, 2024). Further, with the re-evaluation of the theoretical framework, explain the relationship between the use of active learning methodology and experiential learning processes to gain desirable outcomes (Erikson & Erikson, 2018). The gained results present a clear picture of students' attainment in perceived learning when applying an experiential learning theoretical approach paired with a variety of teaching activities. Students demonstrate enhancement in generalization with the reflection of their classroom learning; nonetheless, brief progress in critical analysis of content and communication of identified gaps are the end product of the accomplishment of the designed approach (Villaruel, Benavente, Chuecas & Bruna, 2020).

RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated by Shuell's, (1986), students learning that gain by incorporating their own experiences and activities to prepare more concrete and lasting grounds for learning rather than what taught by teachers just by focusing their perspectives on students' potential. Advocating teachers about to concentrate on outcome-based approach is more than an activity but instead a whole paradigm shift (Mufanti, Carter, & England, 2024). From the study outcomes, it can be observed that there should be a planned process to make students aware of program expectations at the very initial phase. Once students' understanding has been developing then they try to reach the targeted outcomes by including their experiences and accommodating a proactive learning approach, which consequently leads to a rise in program quality level. Integration of students' assessment observations and relating them with the targeted outcomes, guide teachers to aim at the process of refurbishing program curricula. It appears that prior knowledge of expectation and leverage to expand at their own pace can enhance students' creative skills. Students make advancement in their notion of teaching and learning in higher education. Prior knowledge of the opted learning path boosts the interest and a sense of inclusion among students. In addition, it promotes conscious efforts to attain what has been designed for them and that is too with the thorough commitment of teachers.

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